

## **Lesson Plan: Issues Close to Home**

This lesson is designed to actively engage students in their role in local government by finding a topic in the news that touches their lives and then becoming proactive by sending a letter or email to their member of the Board of Supervisors about the issue.

### **Connection to POS: Standards 8.1, 8.2, and 8.5**

- ◆ *Students will be able to explain the responsibilities of a citizen in the family, school, community, state,... (8.1.2.a.)*
- ◆ *Students will be able to identify the local elected officials who represent Fairfax County in the legislative and executive branches at the...local level (8.1.2.e.)*
- ◆ *Students will realize the expectation that responsible citizens become informed about and involved with contemporary and continuing issues in civil life (8.1.3.a.)*
- ◆ *Students will be able to gather information from written, oral, and visual sources (8.5.1.a.)*

### **SOL Standard: 7.4**



### **Objectives**

At the end of this lesson students will be able to:

- ◆ use the local media to identify and take a position on an issue that affects their lives.
- ◆ write a letter or email to their representative on the Board of Supervisors.



### **Materials**

- ◆ Access to the *Fairfax Journal* newspaper in print or online at [www.jrnl.com](http://www.jrnl.com)



### **Time Needed**

- ◆ 1 to 2 class periods.



## **Procedures**

1. Students will access *The Journal* and identify an issue in the news that affects them.
2. Student will take detailed notes on the issue and identify how this issue affects them.
3. Students will then write a letter or email a letter to their local elected official concerning this issue.



## **Assessment**

- ◆ A rubric should be developed to evaluate the letter that includes the following criteria: local issue is clearly identified, the information in the letter was clear, accurate, and reflective of the point of view of the writer, grammar, punctuation, and form of letter are correct.



## **Extensions**

- ◆ If students receive a response to their letters, a class discussion can take place concerning the level of response (form letter vs. individual letter written by the elected official) and what the status is of their issue.



## **Differentiations**

- ◆ This activity could be a class project where the whole class tracks articles, analyzes policy options, and votes on a proposed solution.



## **Interdisciplinary Connections**

- ◆ Along with the English teacher on your team, conduct lessons on the different sections of the newspaper and the different types of information and writing styles a reader could expect to find in each. Special attention should be paid to fact versus opinion, editorials, bias, etc.